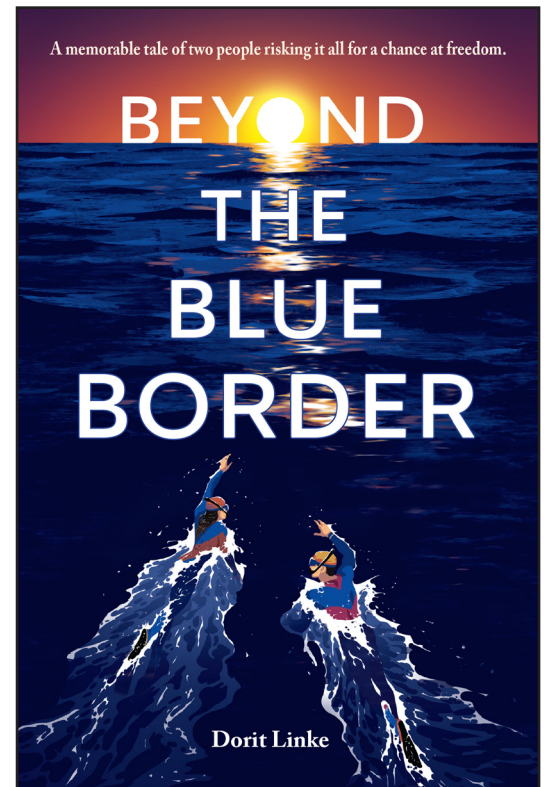


# RESTRICTED AREA. NO TRESPASSING.

## About the Book

The year is 1988, and Hanna and Andreas must escape East Germany. Stuck in dead-end factory jobs after being expelled from school for “agitating against the state,” they’ve got no guarantee of safety and no chance at a better future if they stay.

The teens hatch a daring plan: swim more than forty miles across the Baltic Sea from their hometown of Rostock to the West German town of Fehmarn. Their grueling twenty-five hour journey is unspeakably dangerous. Hypothermia, exhaustion, jellyfish, a violent summer storm, and the constant threat of being caught by Soviet patrols. Will they find the freedom they so desperately seek, or will the weight of their past drag them under?



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## About the Author



Dorit Linke was born in Rostock in the former German Democratic Republic. Growing up, she was a competitive athlete and lifeguard. After high school and the fall of the Berlin Wall, she studied architecture in Berlin and traveled the world. Now available from Charlesbridge as *Beyond the Blue Border*, her novel *Jenseits der blauen Grenze* was nominated for the German Youth Literature Prize in 2015 and has been assigned in schools and adapted for the stage.

## About East Germany & the Soviet Union

- This book is set in the 1980s. What was happening in the world during this time? What was technology and media like? How did people get their news?
- What do you know about the formation of the Soviet Union?
- What do you know about the division of Germany after World War II?
- What were the penalties for people who defected from the GDR (aka East Germany)? Why would people want to defect? Why did the government want them to stay?
- How does your understanding of the Young Pioneers Organization change over the course of the book?
- Why is Jens Blum called Saxony Jensei? What are some examples of strong regional accents and stereotypes in the United States?
- Discuss the incident at the Intershop with the West German woman. What do Saxony Jensei's jokes reveal about life in the GDR? What does this passage tell us about the complicated relationship between West Germans and East Germans? Why do the three get in trouble at school?
- Why is Hanna not allowed to eat lettuce?

## About the Swim

- Why do Hanna and Andreas choose to swim to West Germany? What are some of the risks of swimming, as opposed to sailing, overland travel, or other methods? What are the benefits?
- Whose idea is it to make the sea journey? Why does the other agree to go as well? Do you think it would be possible to make this journey alone?
- Discuss Hanna's and Andreas's preparations for their swim. Do you think they prepare adequately for the challenge of this journey? How would you prepare for such a journey today, using 21st-century tools?
- Many people help Hanna and Andreas defect, in large or small ways. Choose two of their helpers to compare and contrast. What do these people risk by aiding a defection from the GDR? Why would they help anyway?
- How does the author convey the physical and mental demands of the swim?

## About Family and Friends

- What do you learn about Hanna's dad? Why do you think there is more backstory about him directly after she hits Saxony Jensei for insulting him?
- Why do you think Andreas and Hanna are friends? Where does their trust in each other stem from? Do you have a friend you would trust enough to do something risky together?
- What do you learn about Andreas's family? Why do you think they aren't mentioned until later in the book?
- What role do poetry and classical literature play in Hanna's life?